

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 1786

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (ALBERT, CARL)

SUBJECT: CODEL ALBERT VISIT TO KUWAIT

REF: A) KUWAIT 1633; B) STATE 84456

1. CONTROL OFFICER DISCUSSED DETAILS OF CODEL ALBERT VISIT TO KUWAIT WITH SECRETARY GENERAL KUWAIT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ABDULATIF AL-FULAIJ APRIL 11 AND WITH MFA PROTOCOL OFFICE APRIL 12. PREPARATIONS HAD BEEN WELL ALONG AND APPARENTLY UNDER CONTROL. HOWEVER, SITUATION HAS BECOME CONFUSED BY SUDDEN DECISION OF IRAQI LEADER VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN TO ARRIVE IN KUWAIT MORNING APRIL 19 AND LEAVE APRIL 21 AT 10 A.M.

2. ALTHOUGH NOW SUBJECT TO CHANGE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS PLANNED FOLLOWING PROGRAM FOR SPEAKER ALBERT AND HIS PARTY:

MONDAY, APRIL 19

1700 HOURS -- ARRIVE AT KUWAIT AIRPORT WHERE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT GHUNAIM AND ABOUT A DOZEN OTHER

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, MAINLY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, AS WELL AS CHARGE AND EMBOFFS WILL MEET SPEAKER ALBERT. GHUNAIM WILL ESCORT SPEAKER TO HILTON HOTEL.

2000 HOURS -- INFORMAL DINNER WITH CHARGE AND MEMBERS OF
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COUNTRY TEAM AND THEIR WIVES AT HOME OF A/DCM.

TUESDAY, APRIL 20

0845 HOURS -- GHUNAIM WILL ARRIVE AT HOTEL TO ESCORT SPEAKER AND HIS PARTY, WHICH WILL INCLUDE CHARGE, TO SEIF PALACE FOR MEETINGS AT 0900 HOURS WITH AMIR AND 0930 HOURS WITH CROWN PRINCE/PRIME MINISTER. AT AROUND 1000 HOURS PARTY WILL GO TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH WILL BE IN SESSION. GHUNAIM WILL INTRODUCE SPEAKER ALBERT TO ASSEMBLY. MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS WILL FOLLOW PROBABLY IN PRIVATE ROOMS AT ASSEMBLY BUILDING ALTHOUGH EXACT TIMES HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET (MINISTERS NORMALLY ATTEND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSIONS).

FOLLOWING ABOVE MEETINGS, CHARGE WILL HOST LUNCHEON AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AT 1330 HOURS. SPEAKER WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO REST AFTER LUNCH. AT 1730 HOURS HE WILL MEET WITH MEMBERS OF RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AT RESIDENCE. GHUNAIM WILL HOST VIP DINNER AT SHERATON HOTEL TO BEGIN AT 1930 HOURS.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

0800 HOURS -- GHUNAIM WILL ARRIVE AT HOTEL TO ESCORT SPEAKER ALBERT TO KUWAIT AIRPORT FOR 0900 DEPARTURE FOR SHIRAZ.

3. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW CLOSELY PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 CAN BE FOLLOWED. PRESENTLY MFA PROTOCOL OFFICE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ARE TRYING TO WORK OUT A METHOD OF HANDLING BOTH VISITS. (PROBLEM FURTHER COMPLICATED BY EXPECTED PRESENCE IN KUWAIT AT SAME TIME OF YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER.) TALKS WITH IRAQI LEADER ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO GOK AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO DOMINATE ATTENTION OF ENTIRE GOVERNMENT DURING VICE PRESIDENT'S STAY IN KUWAIT. FYI: HE HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO VISIT NEXT MONTH BUT AT LAST MINUTE ASKED TO COME TO KUWAIT APRIL 19 - 21. END FYI. KUWAITIS ALSO ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO VISIT OF SPEAKER ALBERT, AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ARRANGE MEETINGS AS REQUESTED. CHANCES ARE, HOWEVER, THAT WE SHALL NOT KNOW PRECISE PROGRAM UNTIL LAST MINUTE.
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4. SPEAKER SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT, DESPITE OUR STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO CONVINCE KUWAITIS THAT HE IS ON WORKING VISIT AND U.S. PRACTICE DOES NOT PERMIT ACCEPTANCE OF ACCOMMODATIONS, GHUNAIM AND AL-FULAIJ HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT SPEAKER IS THEIR OFFICIAL GUEST. KUWAITIS ARE INSISTING THAT THEY PAY HOTEL BILL, AND WE CONCERNED THAT REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THEIR HOSPITALITY SIMPLY WILL NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AND WILL

BE MISINTERPRETED. (THEY CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THAT RECIPROCITY IS NOT POSSIBLE.)

5. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT THAT GOK ATTACHING CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE TO VISIT. DESPITE THE ENDLESS WAVE OF CHIEFS OF STATE AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE COME HERE IN PAST TWO YEARS, THEY UNDERSTANDABLY PLACE GREAT STORE IN VISIT BY SPEAKER OF U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WHO, APART FROM VICE PRESIDENT IN 1971, IS HIGHEST RANKING AMERICAN TO VISIT KUWAIT. MOREOVER, IN COUNTRY WHICH PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS LONELY POSITION IN REGION AS STRONG PROPONENT OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, KUWAITIS AND GHUNAIM ESPECIALLY HONORED TO HAVE SENIOR OFFICIAL OF U.S. CONGRESS VISIT. EMBASSY REALIZES SPEAKER DID NOT INTEND TO HAVE VISIT TAKE ON SUCH "OFFICIAL" CHARACTERISTICS, BUT RESULT IS UNAVOIDABLE AND FRANKLY WE THINK BENEFICIAL TO U.S. INTERESTS HERE. THEREFORE, EMBASSY HOPES SPEAKER ALBERT WILL BE FLEXIBLE ON HOTEL BILL PROBLEM. UNFORTUNATE THAT VISIT COINCIDES WITH THAT OF IRAQ VICE PRESIDENT. EMBASSY WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND GOK AND WILL REPORT NEW INFORMATION AS SOON AS IT IS AVAILABLE.
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